

H. B. 2534

(By Delegates Iaquina, Fleischauer,  
Longstreth, Stephens, Walker, Azinger)

[Introduced January 18, 2011; referred to the  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Homeland Security then  
the Judiciary.]

**Interim  
Bill**

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by  
adding thereto a new section, designated §9A-1-11b, relating  
to establishing a program to promote veteran friendly  
communities; providing that the Division of Veterans Affairs,  
in consultation with the Veteran's Council, establish a  
program to assist and encourage the development, availability  
and utilization of veteran friendly services, benefits and  
assistance available to veterans in communities in this state;  
annual report to the Legislature.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended  
by adding thereto a new section, designated §9A-1-11b, to read as  
follows:

**ARTICLE 1. DIVISION OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS.**

**§9A-1-11b. Program to promote veteran friendly communities.**

1       (a) The division, in consultation with the Veteran's Council,  
2 shall establish and implement a program to assist and encourage the  
3 development, availability and utilization of veteran friendly  
4 services, benefits and assistance available to veterans in  
5 communities in this state provided by state, federal and local  
6 government agencies as well as private entities. The program shall  
7 include, but not be limited to, the following:

8       (1) Development of resources to provide awareness in  
9 communities of the unique needs and issues of veterans;

10       (2) Identification of funding sources to provide funding for  
11 the establishment and development of the program established in  
12 this section;

13       (3) Identification of funding sources to provide funding to  
14 counties, municipalities and private agencies and organizations  
15 for services, benefits and resources to veterans in their  
16 respective communities;

17       (4) Encouragement and assistance to counties, municipalities  
18 and other government agencies to enhance their efforts to provide  
19 services to veterans and to provide accessibility to services  
20 available to veterans from various public and private agencies and  
21 entities in their communities including, but not limited to:

22       (A) Housing and financial assistance for housing available to  
23 veterans, including housing accommodations accessible to veterans  
24 with disabilities;

1 (B) Healthcare services and assistance available to pay the  
2 costs of healthcare for veterans;

3 (C) Employment resources and opportunities for veterans;

4 (D) Educational and vocational training resources and  
5 opportunities for veterans; and

6 (E) Use of county, municipal and other government agency  
7 Internet websites to provide information to veterans of the  
8 availability of veteran-specific services in the community; and

9 (5) Establishment and development of a program to encourage  
10 competition among counties and municipalities to develop, improve  
11 and enhance services and benefits to veterans, including  
12 establishment of awards and prizes in recognition of counties and  
13 municipalities that excel in providing veteran services.

14 (b) The division may solicit the cooperation, assistance and  
15 counsel of nonprofit organizations representing municipalities and  
16 counties in the state in developing and implementing the program  
17 established in this section.

18 (c) The division shall submit a report to the Joint Committee  
19 on Government and Finance and to any appointed interim committee of  
20 the Legislature on Veterans Affairs on October 1, annually, on the  
21 progress towards implementing and administering the program  
22 established in this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is establish a program to promote veteran friendly communities; the bill provides that the

Division of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Veteran's Council, shall establish a program to assist and encourage the development, availability and utilization of veteran friendly services, benefits and assistance available to veterans in communities in this state.

This section is new; therefore, it has been completely underscored.

This bill was recommended for introduction and passage during the 2011 Regular Session of the Legislature by the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs - Interim.